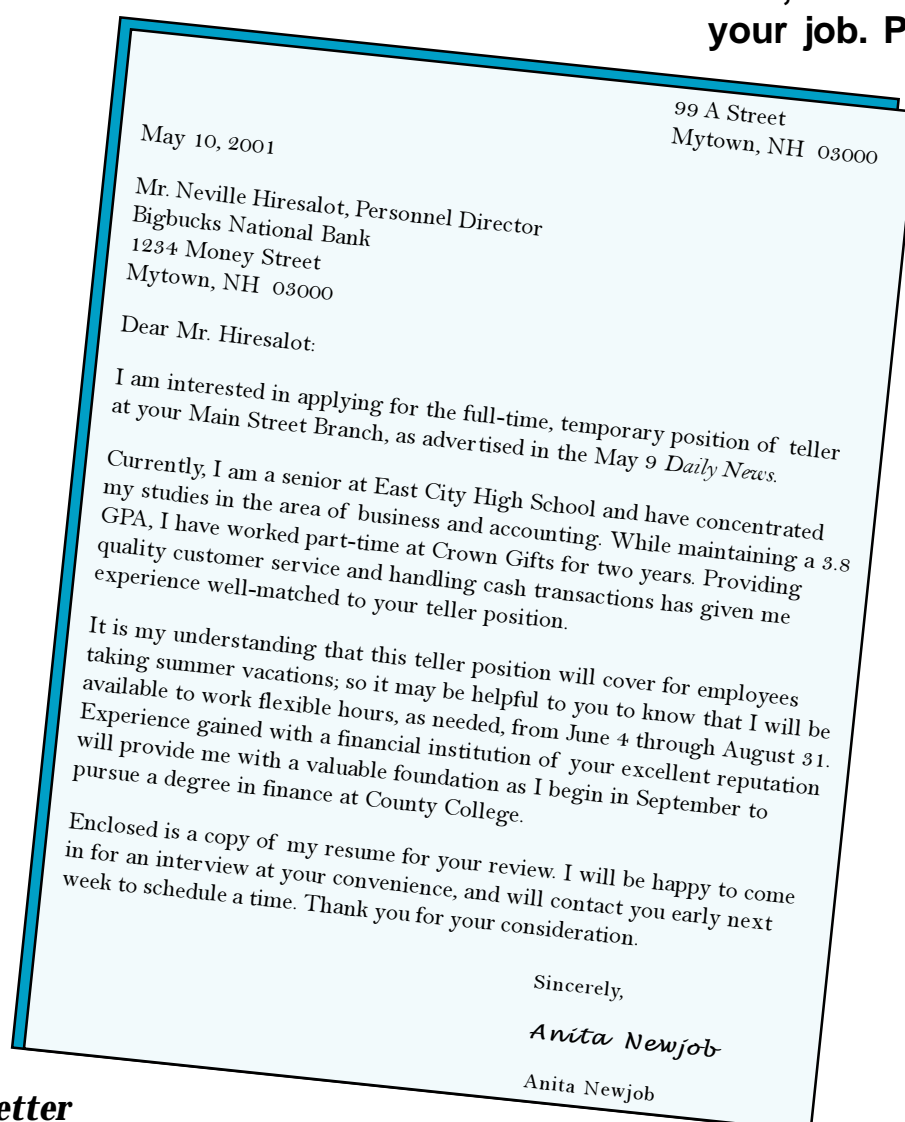


# Writing Your Cover Letter

1. Always write to a specific individual rather than a personnel office. Whenever feasible, use networking sources to introduce yourself in the opening paragraph of your letter. Be sure you spell the individual's name correctly.
2. Show the employer that you've done your homework and have a genuine grasp of the organization's personnel needs and philosophy of business. Be sincere in your praise, but don't over do it!
3. Write each cover letter separately, even if you use a common framework. Personalize the letter with a sentence or two designed to reflect your sincere interest in the specific employer.
4. Use natural language in simple, clear sentences. Don't try to impress the reader with unusual vocabulary or complicated sentence structures.
5. Express your capabilities with confidence, but avoid exaggerating your level of experience. Two part time jobs at a department store do not constitute "extensive" retail management experience.
6. Check and recheck your letter for correctness with regard to spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure. Be sure to have someone who is a good writer review your letter with you.
7. Make sure the final letter is completely professional in appearance. Use standard business letter format on stationery that matches your resume. Do not use dot matrix printers or inferior typewriter ribbons.
8. Finish your letter with a strong closing which indicates the action you desire. Take the initiative by requesting an interview and/or stating your intention to call in a week or two.
9. Let your personality and energy shine through your words. Use a few vivid details about your background to capture the reader's interest.
10. It is important to mention activities, honors, and special skills. These can show the skills that employers look for such as leadership, organization, critical thinking, teamwork, self management, initiative, and influencing others.
11. Keep copies of everything you send, and follow up according to your stated intentions. However, don't rely too heavily on cover letters to get your job. Pursue other avenues of inquiry as well.



**Cover Letter**

<http://www.msstate.edu/dept/Coop/interview/cover.html>  
Mississippi State University Cooperative Education Program

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